

## Ross Dowson archives – correspondence – Year 1967

- 01\_21 +Political Committee Minutes: Anti-(Vietnam)war publications; Montreal business; NDP, Hugo Blanco defense
- 01\_26 Letter to Jeff (W?), from John (W.) on behalf of R. D. and the PC, re: a critique of a proposed leaflet on the ICC (anti Vietnam war campaign)
- 01\_30 Letter to the Administrators of Dialogue '67, U. of Western Ontario from R.D. LSA: re need for contribution from the Marxist left other than the CPC
- 02\_19 Circular to Branch Executive Committees, from Central Office, Canadian Section (FI), from John (W.) on the move towards a twice-monthly *Vanguard* and the necessity of a fund drive
- 02\_19B +Political Committee Minutes: personnel, financial drive; CC plenum; Tour, Hugo Blanco defense
- 02\_23 Letter to Dick (Prinsep?, BC): re Gus (T.) arrival back from Hanoi; media coverage; his upcoming trip to Cuba; activities in Edmonton and Montreal, personnel changes; Art (Y.) going to Montreal; Toronto center press now operating; need a loan
- 03\_05 +Political Committee Minutes: Expulsions from NDP youth, Socialist Caucus protests and appeal meetings; financial drive and new Edmonton youth local
- 04\_18 Press release: protest Montreal police ban on demonstrations at Montreal Expo
- 05\_31 To all Branches: Trailblazers Tour switch from Quebec to Ontario due to lack of French-language personnel
- 06\_00 Pamphlet: **“The coming Canadian revolution”** published in Young Socialist Forum, May-June by the YS/LJS
- 07\_08 Document: adopted by Plenum: **“Our work in the NDP”**; the need to retain a commitment to NDP work; the centrality of our long-range orientation
- 07\_20 Letter to Poul Moller, Denmark, by John (W.) on behalf of the PC [incl. RD] re: facts about U.S. draft-dodgers in Canada; their numbers and their low activity in anti-Vietnam war movement; LSA policy not to encourage them in agreement with SWP

07\_27 Minutes of the PC, letter from the Vancouver branch executive and reply by P. Kent for the PC; re proposal for transfer of Miller and Frazer to the center and for publication of Miller's document

08\_05 +Political Committee Minutes: Miller protests part of his document published, Montreal branch and *LLO* editorial board

08\_09 Letter to Comrade Miller, Vancouver: Acceding to his request not to publish certain chapters of his document; RD does not see importance of an immediate internal discussion on Canadian nationalism or related questions

08\_13 Letter to Comrade Frazer (Vancouver) from P. Kent (RD) for the PC, re his protest that his views are not being treated fairly or seriously

08\_27 +Political Committee Minutes: Youth fund drive and LSA/LS0-Youth financial relations; personnel, publications; International; Brock moving to edit twice-monthly *Vanguard* at centre

09\_11 **Press release:** LSA declares (deplores--ed.) NDP agreement not to contest Robert Stanfield's election to the House as Tory leader a disservice to the party; Mr. Dowson will force an election in 1957 to prevent acclamation of Sydney Smith

09\_14 Letter to Al Harris, Vancouver: he has taken on job of organizer but not full-time – RD thinks this a mistake; no report of discussion on the matter; comments on Vancouver developments

09\_18 Press release: **PC of LSA announce candidature of Ross Dowson in Nova Scotia** riding against Robert Stanfield in light of failure of NDP to field a candidate

09\_22 Letter to The Chief Electoral Officer, J.M. Hamel, Ottawa ON: Application for forms to enter as candidate in by-election

10\_22 +PC Minutes: prep for PC discussion on antiwar work

10\_22B Letter to Lois (Bedard, R.D's sister); at work gathering signatures in Colchester-Hants, N.S.; attended antiwar rally, John (R.) helping with organizing campaign; not only the mines but the steel mill as well being closed; NDPers refuse to sign nomination papers; meeting steelworkers frustrated with union in Sydney; phone-in radio coverage

10\_28 Letter to Paul W. MacEwan, Sydney NS: re interest in a series of articles on the Cape Breton working class movement

- 10\_28B +Letter to Ruth (Bullock), Vancouver: personnel problems; busy in the Nova Scotia election campaign up to NDP caving in
- 11\_21 (Letter undated as to year, found in 1967) from Al Purdy to Ross: willing to add signature on behalf of Ben Bella
- 12\_12 Letter to Allan (E.), Vancouver: R.D. denies making remarks critical of Al and the Vancouver branch; Al proposes his move to the centre (Toronto)
- 12\_99 +(Undated document, ref: Miller & Brock, Vancouver): **Statement by the PC on relations between the CC and the PC:** Issues central to developing a leadership: CC members outside the centre cannot continue to play a leading role in the movement, a task delegated to PC members at the centre alone.

Political Committee Minutes, January 21, 1967. convened: 2:10 p.m.

Chairman: Connolly Secretary: Bannon Attendance: PC all present.  
CC present: Bourhis, Scott.

Minutes of the meeting of December 18, 1966 adopted as read.  
Agenda adopted.

Canada-Vietnam Newsletter: Report by Bannon. Motion: that we are agreeable to the proposal that Current move to Toronto, and, contingent on the agreement of the present editorial board, to the proposal that the Newsletter also move to Toronto, in which case we envisage that Current would continue to play a key role in the publication - carried.

CVN Sub Drive: Report by Kent. Discussion concerning whether or not the drive should be concluded at its original closure date or whether it would be necessary to make an extension. Motion: to inquire of Ottawa concerning finances and a progress report of the drive - carried.

Anti-war Publications: Bannon reported on projected publication of pamphlet on Canadian complicity and receipt of draft copy from Ottawa. Agreed in discussion that we would favor this coming out in printed form and that it should be a CVN publication. Motion: to strike off a comrade to go over the draft and make suggestions as required and to inquire further into the financing and sponsorship of this publication - carried.

#### Montreal:

1. Re Executive Secretary's Tour: Report by Scott on difficulties with tour on the basis of the projected schedule. Discussion. Motion: to proceed with the schedule as is - carried.

2. Re membership status of Ste. Marie: Report by Scott. Motion: that this comrade's membership be suspended on the basis of his failure to comply with a directive of the executive secretary with respect to impermissible conduct toward other comrades on Ste. Marie's part, and that on termination of his present leave of absence from the Montreal branch this suspension be reviewed - carried unan.

3. Re Organizer: Report by Scott. Discussion. Motion: to make consultations during the process of the trans-Canada tour along the lines of discussion - carried.

New Democratic Party: Report by Connolly. Discussion re preparations of the left for the federal convention and how we should approach this. Crandall reported further on discussion of NDP-NDY work in the youth movement. Motion: to proceed along the lines of discussion - carried.

Annual Tour: Discussion. Motion: to write Montreal informing them that we are considering directing this year's tour into Quebec and the Maritimes and inquiring as to whether they could allocate a couple of French-speaking comrades for such a tour - carried.

Financial Drive: Discussion. Scheduled discussion on this next meeting.

Hugo Blanco Defense: Report by Kent followed by discussion. Motion: to send a letter to branches and members-at-large urging them to make a serious attempt to carry this campaign into the trade union movement - carried.

War Crimes Tribunal: Report by Kent. Discussion. Adjourned: 5:30 p.m.



1 Cumberland St.,  
Toronto 5, Ont.,  
January 26, 1967.

Dear Jeff, (W?)

Both Ross and myself have gone over the draft for the projected complicity ~~xxx~~ pamphlet and here are our thoughts on it.

In the first place we are not convinced of the pressing need for such pamphlet. It is true of course that the Victoria Committee have put out their stupid little tract and that its line is rotten - but then on the other hand we have a more or less regular national publication at our disposal. A major consideration in this is finances of course - always a major question, unfortunately. There is no money available from here; we are extremely tight. Are the Newsletter's finances adequate for such a project? It is of course possible, as Ken mentioned in our discussions, that in the long haul it could be made to pay for itself, but the real point is immediate finances in this case.

The second point is that, on reading over the draft, we feel that it is not at all satisfactory and would have to be substantially rewritten if we want to proceed. It is not so much a question of the "tone" of the draft - although in general it is rather inconsistent and not at all sharp enough in many places - but of the political line. The whole draft is written in the context that the reader already disagrees with the war. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ we don't think this can be the case. While not its primary function, we feel that any such pamphlet must first of all make the case against the war - what a terrible and scandalous war it is and why we should be violently opposed to it. Otherwise, why would anyone object to the actions of the Canadian government? The point of the pamphlet is to bring the whole war into focus so that the Liberal gov't's complicity per se is not simply proven to exist, but that it is criminal.

Another major point on which we thought the draft was politically incorrect is on the question of the ICC. While undoubtedly not intended to, the draft tends to imply in some way that the ICC is desirable or that we support it. ~~and~~ Canada has not made a "mockery" of the ICC, on the contrary. The ICC has served the purposes for which the imperialists set it up. Why would we give a good god damn if Canada had ~~the~~ "wrecked" the ICC, even if that were the case? Or that the ICC is "powerless and disrespected"? Even if true, this is not at all germane to our purpose.

There are a number of formulations which we think are highly questionable, if not politically erroneous. One is the statement that the Can. gov't. is "under tremendous pressure" from the U.S. to support the war. How true is this - is it under anything near the pressure that Britain is? And even if so, this is not the, nor a, main reason for support of the war, nor is the profitability of Canadian capital's participation. The war is in the interests of world imperialist counter-revolutionary strategy and thus in the interest of "our" bourgeoisie and "our" government. Bringing in these other ancillary points prominently tends to imply that, given freedom of movement, the government would not support the war or could be fairly easily convinced not to. This plays into the hands of the chauvinists, I think, especially the CP types.

One other example is that you state that we must convince the gov't. that "in order to stave off electoral defeat" it must oppose the war. But this tends to suggest that we have to come up with some method with which they can get off the hook.

In general we felt the general tone of the draft was weak - a little academic - and ~~the~~ seriously understated many points. There were also a considerable number of formulations we disagreed with of which I gave only a couple of examples above. It is really not possible to go into all of these exhaustively in the confines of a letter.



I don't know how you would suggest we proceed from here. To discuss our criticisms of the draft in detail would probably require personal contact rather than correspondence. Perhaps you might make a redraft in the light of our criticisms and hold it off until you were able to come to Toronto and discuss the project further. Well, you are in the best position to know how much time you have and whether it is possible for you to do further work on it at this point. Why don't I leave it at that point and you drop us a line and tell us what your reactions are?

cc: file

complied

  
John Bannon



To the Administrators  
of Dialogue '67,  
Society of Graduate Students,  
University of Western Ontario.

1 Cumberland St.,  
Toronto 5, Ont.,  
January 30, 1967.

Dear Sirs,

I have just come into possession of a copy of the program that you have organized under the title of "Dialogue '67 - Processes of Social Change".

It would certainly appear to present an essential diversity of opinion on key topics. However I would point out to you that insofar as you have attempted to give the Marxist view a hearing you have ended up with spokesmen from only one tendency within the body of Marxist opinion - that of the Communist Party. This is so in every single panel.

Informed opinion is well aware that not only is the Communist Party (an exponent of the views of the Soviet leadership) but one of three or four tendencies in the Marxist movement, but to a large degree a discredited one and the least viable one.

I understand that while this project was in the planning stage it was suggested to you that you include in one of the panels George Novack, a pre-eminent U.S. Marxist scholar and a collaborator with Isaac Deutscher on the book "The Age of Permanent Revolution - A Trotsky Anthology". For reasons unknown to me you did not take up this opportunity.

It so happens that I will be coming through London at the close of a national tour during which I will be speaking at university campuses and public meetings in all major Canadian centers. I would be pleased to offer myself as a participant in any one of the panels but Panel IV.

I have been the editor of a Canadian Marxist paper for some 20 years now currently known as the Workers Vanguard. I have over the past decades lectured on a wide range of Marxist concepts and have played an active role in Canadian political life. In fact I contested the Toronto Broadview riding against the Hon. George Hees who is participating in your panel - The Politics of Social Change, and on several occasions have contested the Toronto mayoralty.

I anticipate an early reply to this proposition so that I can make the necessary adjustments to my itinerary.

Sincerely,

Ross Dowson,  
Executive Secretary,  
League for Socialist Action.

RD/jw



Central Office,  
Canadian Section.

1 Cumberland St.,  
Toronto 5, Ont.,  
February 19, 1967.

To Branch Executive Committees:

Dear Comrades,

For some time now, particularly since our last section convention, our movement has been looking forward to the time at which we will move into ~~bi~~-monthly publication of the Vanguard.  
/twice

Developments since that convention have strengthened the necessity for this important move and have demonstrated the widened possibilities inherent in it. If this is a practical perspective - and the Political Committee believes that it is - we would propose to begin publishing the paper on a twice-monthly basis this coming fall.

Of course this will mean that all branches must give full consideration to serious reallocation of their forces in the direction of gearing the entire movement to meet the far greater responsibility that we will all have in terms of sales, distributions, and building the subscription base of the paper. There is no point expanding our paper unless we intend to utilize it. Yet there are branches now who do <sup>not</sup> make adequate use of the paper as a monthly. There will have to be a qualitative change with respect to this. In addition more frequent contributions to the paper from outside the center will be required and there will have to be a general tightening up of financial arrangements, for one this will mean that branches will be expected to pay for their bundles in full and on time.

However the primary matter which concerns us right now is ... MONEY. What we require in order to proceed is your assurance that your branch can come across with its share of the necessary funds to put a solid financial base under this expansion. The annual cost of publishing the paper will at least double and an additional full-timer is obviously required to handle the extended workload. In this context, the objective of our annual drive would have to be \$9000.00 - and that is a bare minimum. This represents a qualitative leap financially, being nearly double the objective of the last drive - a drive which met its objective but not without some difficulty.

We would direct the branch executive committees to make a serious assessment of the realistic possibilities in their areas, considered both in the light of past performance and present possibilities. We need to know what your branch can contribute. Comrades, we need this information immediately. The time of our annual drive is not far off and we intend to proceed on schedule. Please communicate with us as very soon as possible.

Fraternally,

John Bannon.



Political Committee Minutes, February 19, 1967.

convened: 10:30 a.m.

Chairman: Connolly    Secretary: Bannon    Attendance: all PC members present.

Minutes of the previous meeting adopted as read. Agenda adopted.

Executive Secretary's Tour: Report by Kent. This report included several proposals by CC members which are dealt with under separate items contained in these minutes.

Personnel: Motion: That comrade Brown be transferred to Montreal following the anti-war action of March 11-12 - carried. Motion: to inform the youth movement that comrade Crandall will not be in a position to stand for renomination as national secretary at the time of the youth convention as it is required that he be released for full time work in the section - carried. Motion: to propose to the Executive Committee of the Toronto branch that comrade Crandall replace comrade Brown as organizer, with the understanding that comrade Crandall will not be able to assume the full duties of organizer until he is released from his considerable responsibilities in the leadership of the youth movement. - carried. Motion: that comrade Brock move into the center at the conclusion of the present school term - carried. Discussion of personnel in London. It was generally agreed that we would not object to comrade G's leaving London, or to the youth movement pulling out of the London situation in that case because of inability to reinforce the comrades there.

Annual Financial Drive: Discussion of this in relation to the projected twice-monthly publication of the paper. Motion: to inform Montreal that we are in agreement with their proposal for a joint fund drive and to enquire from them about their financial share of the drive - carried. Motion: to write a letter to the Executive Committees of the branches along the lines of discussion - carried.

Central Committee Plenum: Report by Kent of proposal of Vancouver CC members for a CC Plenum. Discussion. Motion: to organize a plenum of the Central Committee for the date of July 7 & 8, 1967, to deal primarily with the following questions: 1) the Press, 2) Anti-War Work, and 3) the Quebec internal discussion - carried.

Montreal: Report by Kent concerning situation of comrade Kendrick and of correspondence from comrade Frazer relevant to this.

Trailblazers Tour: Kent reported that Montreal comrades propose that this year's tour be a Quebec tour and that they have the personnel resources to man the tour. Motion: to concur with and welcome this proposal and to make further inquiries re the schedule of the tour, whether we will be required to give some assistance, etc. - carried.

Hugo Blanco Defence: Report by Kent. B.M. will be publishing a pamphlet shortly containing Andre Gunder Frank's speech to the Toronto solidarity meeting. The chairman of that meeting is being requested to expand his introductory remarks to facilitate an introduction to the pamphlet. Profits from sales will go to help defence efforts.

Anti-War Work: Discussion.

Canada-Vietnam Newsletter: Report by Bannon. Discussion.

adjourned: 3:05 p.m.



February 23, 1967

Dear Dick

Well, Gus arrived today from Hanoi and intervening points. He looks well and obviously had a very good experience. He actually arrived yesterday at 6 but I only met him as a journalist at the press interview and after that ushered him off home with Julie to renew acquaintanceship. He got a bit of coverage on both TV stations and it seems certain that he will be on the big CBC Sunday show--I gather they have a couple of Vietnam films and are locking him in with them. Be sure to tell the comrades to watch this Sunday show.

We will be having a meeting on Saturday to get a report in depth. At this time we are unable to determine just what time he will be able to give to say a tour--or series of meetings. He had to resign from his job but it looks like he will be able to switch back to psychiatry. As you can imagine they have no money and Julie is expecting within the next month. He has already made his disposition with the War Crimes Tribunal, is booked in at the March 11th meeting here in Toronto and he has started to write up some of his impressions which we will integrate with those of a Japanese comrade who was in Vietnam on the first team and an economist of some stature.... and prepare for publication, possibly as a pamphlet.....

Glad to hear that you are really looking forward to your trip to Cuba. I see the latest W Outlook affirms the ~~strongly~~ report of Regual that Radio Havana in its rebroadcast of Fidel's Tricontinental Congress speech skipped over the attack on Sosa, Trotskyism and MR. Gus had a very good impression of the Cubans he met in Hanoi--the Cuban government has maintained a War Crimes Investigation Committee which keeps Cuban informed, including the government no doubt. Do you see the English edition of Granma? We are getting it regularly via air. If you do not see it tell me and I will send you some recent copies so you get the feel of things there before heading off. If Allen is not getting it at the store he should write in for it.

Enjoyed my stay in Vancouver very much although it was rather rushed and so I had little time to really talk to anyone. The tour is not finished yet. We delayed going into Ottawa because of the expulsions but now I have agreed to go ~~XXXXX~~ March 16-17-18. The situation is quite good in Edmonton. Even though Dick and Colwyn will be pulling out as soon as the school term ends it is apparent that we will be able to carry on. We have recruited a couple of very good students and it seems certain that they will hold. The public meeting I thought was a good one. About 20-25 turned up at the Corona Hotel. We are hoping to widen our connections through the coming big show-convention of the Alta NDP. The caucus is very week--revolves around us largely but it seems certain that it will pick up some good connections. We had a good meeting in Saskatoon. From a public point of view the big success was the McGill Socialist Club meeting. About 50 attended--the biggest that they have had this term and all the left wingers were jubilant for they say I mopped the floor with one of the chief anti-Trotskyists in the NDP-NDY--a fellow by the name of Lenihan. Really I didn't do much--in fact he did the job on himself. Of course the main purpose of the tour was not public propaganda but to ~~xxxxx~~ have discussions with comrades about problems of the movement. And we are off again. After the March action ArtY and Penny will be going to Montreal. Pat feels that she is unable to function as organizer for a period because Peter is ~~not~~ requiring her help. He has been improving lately but requires attention. There



is another aspect to it, and that is that the very successes in Montreal which we must attribute to Pat above all have resulted in our growing out of her. We need in the most pressing way a fairly sophisticated comrade who can learn to speak French. Unfortunately despite all her efforts Pat ~~can~~ not only cannot speak it but is still unable to hear it--which is much worse. Art is convinced that he will be fluent in French in a short while--so we are going to continue our colonizing process

Tomorrow we will be running the first portion of our paper on our own press. I have managed to get ~~an~~ single page insert all laid out and a negative made for Harry to run this weekend on our big press. In other words we have worked out nearly all the technical problems for the rest of the paper and I will be trying to finish up the rest of the copy for the linotyper over the weekend. I have never laid in a paper for offset reproduction before. It is very interesting and for the first time quite time consuming. But from here on in I think that it will be no trouble at all. I am looking forward to see what kind of print job Harry can do. We have also laid out the French version of Trotsky's very excellent speech on the Russian Revolution to the students of Copenhagen University. We want this for this years Trailblazer effort. Another thing we settled in Montreal. This next Trailblazer tour will be Quebecois. We will have enough comrades who speak French to make up the tour and enable it to concentrate in Quebec, possibly spending little time in the Maritimes. Comrades are going to arrange their holidays so that they can spend two weeks on the project. We have already put out a French version of that mimeographed pamphlet we published Marx and Engels on the Labor Party. Pat feels sure that the Montreal Vietnam committee will be putting out something in French so we will be all set.

How did the Dellinger project come off and did we manage to carry through with Lens and some kind of Trade union conference?

Re the money you are so good as to offer to loan us. We are tight right now and could use a little spare money. Not suprising of course because we are on the eve of the financial drive and we have always lived up to the hilt. If you can loan us \$1,000 it would be convenient for us, not necessary, but convenient. If you did so as soon as the drive got underway I would put it aside for purely emergency purposes--so in a sense Dick I am leaving it up to you. I do not see that you should go to any trouble, liquidate any of your bonds or however you have your most accessible money

When do you leave for Cuba? Of course you must drop off and meet our comrades in Mexico. They always look forward to meeting any of us.

warmest regards

Ross



Secretary: Bannon    Present: all PC members. Lynne and Pratt of the youth NEC by invitation.

Minutes of the previous meeting adopted as read.  
Agenda adopted.

New Democratic Party: Report of Ottawa defence meeting. Results modest. Further report that all youth memberships being held up by provincial party office. Expectation on part of Ottawa comrades that projected expulsions will go wider than ourselves. Motion: 1) that all comrades who have not received their memberships move immediately to make specific formal enquiries to the provincial office by phoning and by letters to the provincial secretary, and 2) that we defer further action until the results of these enquiries are ascertained and we have sufficient information to work with - carried. Situation in Ottawa is now that 2 have been expelled and 3 held up. Motion: 1) that the two expelled formally demand that a written answer and charges be given them by the provincial secretary and that they proceed to mobilize for the Ottawa Area Council meeting, and 2) that we urge the Socialist Caucus to send out a letter protesting the Ottawa expulsions and suggesting that a substantial number of other memberships are being held up, some for as long as 6 months, and ask information from SC members concerning the situation in their various areas - carried. Motion: to urge the Socialist Caucus to send a letter in its name to the Ottawa Area Council meeting protesting the expulsions and calling attention to the previous witch-hunt actions of the Ottawa Center constituency executive - carried. Motion: that we consider it desirable that a protest meeting open to all NDPers be organized in Toronto March 18 or 19 - carried.

Financial Drive: Report and discussion of received commitments from the branch executive committees. Motion: to proceed from October 1 with the twice-monthly publication of the paper on the basis of commitments received, that the total objective of the drive be \$8000, and that the drive be carried from March 15 to May 1 - carried.

Youth: Report by Crandall of the constitution of a youth local in Edmonton on the understanding that the youth local and the comrades not in the youth will presently function as a single unit. Reported possibility Flemming will be leaving London. It was agreed that we saw no serious objection to this.

Adjourned: 10:10 p.m.



February 23, 1967

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Well, Gus arrived today from Hanoi and intervening points. He looks well and obviously had a very good experience. He actually arrived yesterday at 6 but I only met him as a journalist at the press interview and after that ushered him off home with Julie to renew acquaintanceship. He got a bit of coverage on both TV stations and it seems certain that he will be on the big CBC Sunday show--I gather they have a couple of Vietnam films and are locking him in with them. Be sure to tell the comrades to watch this Sunday show.

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warmest regards

Ross



For immediate release

April 18, 1967

Local anti-war activists expressed shock and dismay at the proposed police ban on demonstrations at Expo. Members of the Voice of nubes on Vietnam ridiculed the idea that demonstrations against the Vietnam war were likely to cause violence. "I've just come back from New York, where last weekend nearly half a million people protested the war, without the least incident of violence occurring" said one member.

The Committee has been planning for some while now to demonstrate against the war on July 1, at Expo. It considers the police plan to deny permission to this demonstration, while permitting those of other groups like the Knights of Columbus, as a clear violation of the basic rights of freedom of association and expression. "Obviously the police are discriminating against certain groups" the committee member stated.

The committee intends to oppose the police plan on two counts: 1) that Expo, which will be visited by hundreds of thousands of persons, is by virtue of this fact, a public gathering place, 2) that it has been built by public funds. It considers the police ban unconstitutional, and has contacted other groups calling on them to defend their basic civil rights threatened by the proposed law.

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for further information: 273-5734  
renseignements: 843-5284



1 Cumberland St  
Toronto

May 31, 1967

To all branches and members at large

Dear Comrades;

Unforeseen difficulties have developed that make it impractical to project this year's Trailblazers into the Quebec area—as we had previously visualized.

The Political Committee has decided to turn the tour into an all-Ontario project.

This can be particularly valuable from the point of view of building the July 1st action. On top of this we feel that the Confederation issue of YSF can be circulated with relative ease on a really big scale along with the Vanguard and the new trade union pamphlet which will be out shortly after the June issue comes off the press.

While we appreciate that this is short notice it may well be that comrades who felt that lack of French barred them from the previous project may now wish to apply. Because of the location of the major Ontario population areas the tour will never be very far from the center, nor will it be for any long unbroken period of time. It is therefore possible that comrades who never thought of applying for the previous project may like to spend a week or more of their vacation on an Ontario tour.

All applications should be sent in immediately listing the dates most suitable.

fraternally

P. Kent

(P. P.)



## OUR WORK IN THE NDP

(adopted by the LSA/LSO plenum of July 8, 1967)

In May 1966 the convention of the Canadian section adopted a document entitled “The NDP Hardens.” This document made an evaluation of the NDP’s evolution into the present period and drew certain conclusions from that evaluation concerning the nature of our work in the NDP which marked a significant change in emphasis from the previous stage. Because it is the opinion of the Political Committee that a degree of misinterpretation, or at minimum, confusion has shown itself to exist in practice concerning this question, it is the purpose of these comments to restate the main conclusions of that document, to clarify the practical consequences in terms of our continuing work in the NDP and to briefly encompass further developments dating from the time of our last convention.

It is important that there be complete clarity on this subject. For us as revolutionary socialists, it is axiomatic that theory and practice are interrelated. Any misinterpretation or confusion that exists in practice concerning the application of our long-range NDP orientation, (even if it is simply a matter of lack of consciousness or drift under the pressure of an extremely heavy workload in other areas) will sooner or later surface in misinterpretation and confusion on the theoretical plane as well.

The convention document described the process by which the NDP and trade union bureaucracy have deliberately suppressed any impulse toward the building of the party as a mass movement with any real internal dynamism and democracy. It showed instead how they have largely succeeded in coldly creating a well-oiled electoral machine where real power lies not with the working class base of the party but with the petty-bourgeois-orientated parliamentary clique and the top layer of the labor fakers. We said that the formative stage of the party had come to a definitive close.

This primary conclusion has been further validated by subsequent developments. In the intervening period the bureaucracy has, if anything, further consolidated its organizational stranglehold on the party and increased in its power — drunk arrogance and intolerance of radical dissent in the party. The utter cynicism and crudity with which it has conducted the current Ontario expulsions leaves little room for doubt on this point. Tied in with the expulsions and at least equally important in this period in assessing the bureaucracy’s relative immunity to rank and file pressure is the party’s cowardly tokenist position on the war in Vietnam, and its unbroken continuation over the past year. This at a time when Washington’s brutal escalation of the war has even moved U Thant to voice fear that we are in “the initial phase of World War III,” and when the Canadian and international anti-war movement is growing.

Based on that main conclusion, which is fully motivated in the original document, we drew derivative conclusions concerning the future character of our NDP work and its relative intensity.

From a tactical point of view, the document said that it was necessary to recognize the relationship of forces now existing in the party and the level of political consciousness in it. We said that we would have to present our views in “a more educational and cautious manner,”



realizing that for the present, the policy of the movement has been decided and not wishing to get trapped in conflicts that tend to pose the question of alternative leadership sharply and which would impel the brass to move in on us.

Most broadly, the document formulated the main change in emphasis this way: “It means that the NDP remains the focus of our politics – but not the centre of our activities.”

More specifically, we said that that meant the scaling down (NOT discontinuance) of our work in the now shell-like constituency associations except around elections and other broad activities which might bring new elements into the party or its periphery. Basically what was meant was that our comrades should not become nearly as involved as previously in organizational legwork and responsibilities. There was considerable value to this when the constituencies had a certain continuous life of their own, in terms of building comrades’ reputations as party builders. In this period, the value of this type of activity has diminished, having little potential (between elections) for contact and propaganda work. The document also prefaced that section by stating, in the context of the overall validity of our long-range assessment of the NDP: “It means that — we shall continue to encourage membership in the NDP and to work in the NDP.” (emphasis added) We will return to that later.

The document projected paying greater attention to the possibilities of NDP work in the trade union movement, commenting that “it would seem certain that the unions, much more so than the constituency organizations, are going to more rapidly register new moods and new turns to the left of the class.”

Finally it projected a much greater emphasis and allocation of forces to the independent work and face of the movement, in the context that growing opportunities present, and the pressing need to build our cadre. We said that “the main possibilities for this growth lie in the public work of the independent forms of the movement. We have to make more of our forces available for this independent work.”

Since the convention, we have carried out this greater emphasis on open work and very effectively overall. The encouraging success of our recently-concluded drive to launch the paper as a twice-monthly testifies to that. As well, over this period there has been a massive shift into anti-war work which has made us the major political tendency in building and leading the anti-Vietnam-war movement, a fact which is recognised by even our most virulent opponents and which they employ to red-bait both inside and outside of it.

All this, and the fact the YND is no longer at this time a major work area for our youth movement, have tended to make NDP work seem at times like a marginal concern. Unfortunately there have been signs in the movement that we have displayed a certain tendency to drift into regarding it as such.

One of these signs was pointed out in a PC circular sent out April 25, 1967. In the Ontario expulsions situation we found that a substantial number of comrades did not even know what their membership status was and had not enquired about it, in some cases having allowed the



matter to drift for a considerable period. Other errors of a similar character with respect to NDP work could be pointed out, but such detail is unnecessary.

The letter reaffirmed our policy that every comrade who can must maintain membership in the NDP. It further stated that every comrade who is an NDP member must maintain at least minimal connections with his or her NDP club, and that this meant attending club meetings.

What we were concerned with was not the intensity of our NDP work, but keeping regular contact with the party and its organizations, and the requirement that all comrades who are NDP members meet this elementary commitment. We cannot sustain our connections in the NDP if we do not do this. While it is true, as the letter referred to stated, that not much takes place between elections in the clubs, this is precisely what makes it so important that we do keep tabs on what little activity is going on. What we are conducting in the NDP at the present time is in many essential respects a long-term holding operation. The criterion by which we judge a holding operation is not immediate results, but our long-range assessment of the party and our tasks with respect to it. In fact, the less active the party is internally, the harder it will be in this period to regain any connections which we may allow to let slide. In this respect, there is even more reason to maintain contact with the NDP on a regular basis in a period when the internal dynamism of the party has been largely stamped out by the bureaucracy than in a period where the clubs are more viable.

But, while still recognising that the scope for activity in this somewhat case-hardened electoral machine is more constricted than in the more formative period, it would be a gross error to ignore the fact that important actions can still be carried through the clubs. For example a Toronto riding club recently passed a resolution endorsing the July 1 action, making its mailing list available to the July 1 mobilization office. This constituted an important if modest victory. Similarly with the resolutions passed by several clubs in opposition to the recent expulsions.

If we want to pose what the NDP should be doing, then we have to attempt to involve the party directly and work through it and in it, at least initially. We did this on the issue of Vietnam very strongly and no one can accuse the socialist wing of the NDP of not trying to work through the party; if the anti-war movement, as it is, exists almost exclusively outside of the organizational framework of the NDP, that is entirely the fault of the NDP's myopic, opportunist leadership. The record is very clear and very public on this matter.

The only basis upon which the necessity for sustained NDP connections could be seriously questioned were if we had some reason to change our assessment of the NDP's potential for future growth. We have no such reason. While the political hegemony and organizational hold of the bureaucrats on the party reigns virtually unchallenged for the moment, and while we might even say that the NDP continued to harden since our last convention, the recent by-elections are convincing evidence that disillusionment with the capitalist parties is still growing among the working class and is resulting in a more or less steadily increasing support for the NDP, as conservative and opportunist as its program and leadership are. While because of the machine-like character the bureaucracy has been able to impose on the party, and the fact that the leadership does nothing to deepen the understanding of newly attracted elements, this increasing



support has not resulted in a substantial influx of militants into the party as activists at this time, the party membership has continued to grow. All of this strongly confirms our view that the great majority of workers will see the NDP as the first alternative to bourgeois politics, and will go through a more or less prolonged experience with its liberal-reformist ideology before they will be prepared to rally in any great numbers to the revolutionary alternative.

Given the sharp contradictions both nationally and internationally, a continued influx of forces into the party cannot help but result in the revitalisation of its internal life; we have to be there and have sunk roots to take advantage of the situation.

However, the prospect of this revitalization is a long-range one, and in the present context, given the dearth of any real internal dynamism other than in terms of mobilising for elections, it is extremely difficult for any serious socialist and/or militant to have much real continued perspective for work in the NDP. We see the very pronounced tendency for such elements to become demoralised or diverted and leave.

In this context, it is necessary for us to pose our orientation to the NDP with a different emphasis than in the past. While in the more formative period of the NDP we never pointed to the party as the instrument of the socialist revolution, we never stated specifically (in public) that it was not. What we did was to strongly emphasise the progressive character of its development, at the same time underlining its gross deficiencies and demarking the necessity for a socialist program and leadership.

This is no longer sufficient to give direction and perspective to radicals and militants, many of whom are becoming profoundly discouraged with the NDP. Even the most unsophisticated of these elements can readily see that the NDP as it is now cannot be the instrument for the socialist revolution.

We now have to say more openly and more precisely why the NDP is not in and of itself the answer to the fundamental problems and tasks confronting the working class. We have to intervene more directly and more often with our publication and open members (as we have begun to do in the current Ontario expulsions). We must project the need for socialists to take activity where necessary outside the organisational framework of the NDP and we have to pose the necessity of constructing revolutionary cadres for the vanguard party. In short, we want to draw militant trade unionists, radical youth and socialist NDPers around us more and more directly, recruiting the maximum numbers.

Operating in this manner is no more in contradiction with our general orientation to the NDP than our projection at the convention of allocating much greater time, energy and forces to our independent work. It is a complementary direction and flows from the position of the convention document.

It is important at all times for us to be conscious of the dialectical interrelationship of our work in the NDP and that outside of it, because if we are proceeding correctly, there is no element of contradiction between the two. The mistakes and the drift evident in the immediate past period with respect to NDP work were an error of over-correction. The convention



document pointed out a changed situation in the NDP which had existed for some time, and with which, in essence, we were catching up. What began to happen was that we were going overboard in the other direction, producing a tendency to virtually dismiss work in the NDP itself, except for a handful of comrades. By being aware that this tendency toward over-correction often surfaces to one degree or another with major shifts in our work, we can minimize its effects in the future on our work.

(ends)



E 4 1965-67 RD  
1 Cumberland St.,  
Toronto 5, Ont.,  
July 20, 1967.

Poul Møller,  
Kornmarken 18, 2.,  
Espergærde,  
Denmark.

Dear Comrade,

This is in reply to your letter of July 14 regarding the question of U.S. draft dodgers coming to Canada and related questions. I think somehow you have a misimpression of the number of young Americans coming to Canada to avoid the draft. The most accurate estimate is in the range of 2000. At any rate the number is not very much higher than that, and the numbers arriving over the past period, have not, to our knowledge, increased significantly. The vast majority of these people come here before their draft call has come up; we have had no experience, ~~not~~ have heard of any, with American youth who are already in the armed forces attempting to desert to Canada. In the case of those who come here to avoid their draft call, there is no question of political asylum. The Canadian government has an extradition treaty with the U.S., but draft evasion is not one of the "crimes" covered by that treaty. Generally, once draft evaders have come here they attempt to establish the status of landed immigrants. The Canadian government has the option of trying to deport them on one pretext or another but so far has not done so. There are at least two possible reasons for this: 1. the widespread opposition to the war in Vietnam in Canada, and 2. the possibility that the U.S. government finds it less embarrassing to let the whole matter slide rather than attempt to have them returned to the United States. What the situation would be concerning deserters I don't know, but as I said we have had no experience with this.

Just one other point on the straight facts: the vast majority of draft evaders who come to Canada were not active in the anti-war movement in the U.S. prior to their departure, ~~not~~ do they join or become active in the Canadian anti-war movement when they get here. To be sure, it is highly probable that the great majority of them are opposed to the war in one way or another, but the primary motivation is personal escapism. This is understandable, but in our opinion does nothing to further the defeat of imperialism in Vietnam. We have even met one or two who support the war but nevertheless do not wish to serve in the armed forces.

Our attitude to this question is similar to that of the Socialist Workers Party. We do not encourage young Americans facing the draft to come to Canada. As Trotskyists, we believe that U.S. opponents of the Vietnam war can best fight against the war inside the armed forces, when and if they are drafted. We do not know if you are familiar with the very fine propaganda work conducted by a member of the SWP, Pfc. Howard Petrick, against the war within the army base at which he was stationed, but in case you are not, we have enclosed a pamphlet which deals with this case. We would suggest that you would find this and other ~~xx~~ available material very useful in Denmark, especially in your work with U.S. soldiers.

Our general approach is not only not to encourage the emigration to Canada of American youth who are draftable, but to encourage those who can to return to the U.S. after they have come here and to participate in the anti-war movement there, if necessary going into the armed forces



and taking their opposition to the war with them. Of course, this is not an easy course to urge on those who have already had their draft call come up, for they face possible 5-year jail terms if they return after that. But most of the Americans who come here to avoid the draft come before their call has come up, have therefore violated no law and are not subject to reprisals if they return in time. In a few cases we have successfully convinced Americans in this latter position to return to the U.S. However we have met only a small fraction of the draft dodgers in Canada, for most of them are not active opponents of the war and do not come around the anti-war movement here.

The only element in Canada which consciously encourages young Americans to come to Canada to evade the draft is the Student Union for Peace Action, a "new left", petty-bourgeois, pacifist-oriented group. This group is not at all active in the Canadian anti-war movement as a whole.

In our opinion, Americans who oppose the imperialist aggression of their government in Vietnam can best fight the war in their own country. There they have full citizenship rights, they are most familiar with the conditions, they are integrated from the point of view of language and culture and can make the best contribution to the struggle. Besides which, one of the most strategic weaknesses of the American bourgeoisie is the widespread doubts about and opposition to the Vietnam war within their own armed forces. In general, we think it is very harmful for opponents of the war to ~~be~~ discard their best opportunity to influence American troops by refusing induction. By leaving the U.S. to avoid the draft, or by deserting if they are already in the armed forces, they cut themselves off from the arena of ~~struggle~~ struggle against the war in which they can be most effective. As well, it is our opinion that this type of action cuts across the revolutionary socialist concept of mass ~~struggle~~ struggle in an individualistic direction.

On the other hand, for a young American to avoid the draft or desert will have consequences for his personal life that are very permanent. One is that he will never be able to return to the U.S. as long as it has a capitalist government without the possibility of loss of citizenship rights and possible jail sentence. He will be cut off from his ~~former~~ friends and family and the whole cultural environment with which he is familiar. We feel that especially with opponents of the war who are potentially revolutionary socialists it is important that they return to the U.S. if they have not already burned their bridges. We find that it is precisely among this type of person among draft dodgers here that we find the people who are most receptive to our ideas that they should return and fight the war at home, if necessary in the armed forces themselves.

If it is impossible for such a person to return, we would certainly welcome him into the anti-war movement here and attempt to educate him and recruit him to our movement. But ~~where~~ where it is possible for such people to go back, we feel it is our best contribution to the building of the anti-war and socialist movements in the U.S. to encourage them to do so. We feel the same case, and even more so, obtains with people who are already U.S. soldiers, because they are in a unique situation to influence the forces who are actually fighting the war.

I hope this letter answers your questions ~~satisfactorily~~ satisfactorily. If we can give you any other information, please don't hesitate to write us against

with comradely greetings,

*John Bannan*  
for the Central Office,  
Canadian Section.



P.S. In principle, of course, we are totally opposed to the draft and support the right of anyone not to serve in the imperialist armed forces. But we feel the main question is the direction of the anti-war movement. We have opposed the anti-war movement in Canada as such getting involved in aid to draft-dodgers, not because we are unsympathetic to their problems, but because we feel the main task of the anti-war forces is mass mobilization against the war and against the complicity of the Canadian capitalist government. We feel that to turn the movement in the direction of aiding these youth as such would be a serious diversion from its main work of organizing opposition to the war, and particularly the role of the Canadian government in supporting the war. Even in the United States itself the numbers ~~attempting~~ attempting to avoid the draft are a very long way from constituting a mass ~~struggle~~ struggle on this plane.



Political Committee Minutes, July 27, 1967. convened: 9:45 p.m.

Chairman: Crandall Secretary: Bannon Present: <sup>J.W.</sup> Bannon, Connolly,  
<sup>J.R.</sup> Crandall, Kent. - R.D.  
Absent: Mack (on leave).

Minutes of June 10, 1967 and July 15, 1967 adopted as read.  
Agenda adopted.

Editorial Board of La Lutte Ouvriere: Received the following recommendation from the present EB concerning personnel changes: That Natalie be dropped, and that Paquette and Nora be added. Discussion. Motion: that since the time scheduled for the joint meeting of the PC with Montreal CC members (Aug. 5-6 weekend) is not far removed, action on this recommendation be delayed until that meeting but that in the interim we certainly have no objection to the EB making any temporary adjustments that it may consider necessary to its proper functioning - carried.

Documentation: Discussion of correspondence from Paquette re editorial changes to Theses on Quebec. It was decided that further consultation should be made with comrades on the editing commission. Discussion of letter from Lloyd concerning objections to the practice of putting internal bulleting on sale rather than distributing them to the membership. Motion: that the executive secretary reply to the letter along the lines of discussion - carried.

Personnel: Discussion of letter from the Vancouver branch executive concerning the decision of the CC plenum on the transfer of Miller and Fraser to the center. Motion: to reply along the lines of discussion and to append the letter and the reply to these minutes - carried.

Publications: Discussion concerning disposition of the material submitted by Miller on "Who Owns Canada". Motion: 1) we reaffirm our motion contained in the May 16, 1967 PC minutes, adding that, in the process of further discussion, we have concluded that we have further disagreements with the material, e.g. we consider several formulations in Ch. 8 on nationalism incorrect and contradictory; 2) we are therefore not prepared at this time to accept Miller's latest proposal; 3) that we publish chapters 2 and 8 for circulation and discussion in the movement, assigning a comrade to write an article outlining our position; 4) we affirm our intention to publish a pamphlet on "Who Owns Canada"; 5) we strike off a comrade authorized to proceed in the direction of preparing this pamphlet, seeking the collaboration of Miller in this and utilizing some of the valuable material prepared by him - carried. Motion: that Kent be assigned to the pamphlet - carried.

Tour: Kent reported on personnel changes. Report adopted.

Personnel: Discussion. Lucien transferred to status of member-at-large.

Adjourned: 12:25 p.m.



July 28, 1967.

To the Vancouver branch executive.

Dear Comrades;

We have received and considered your communication of July 23rd.

With regards to point one of your resolution; we do not know how to meet your request that we "absolve" comrade Miller of the "charges" you specify or any other "charge". Particularly when, as you yourselves note, even the alleged one was "unlaid".

What you consider to be quote, charges, unquote, apparently refer to a comment comrade Kent is alleged to have made in the course of an extended discussion and in the course of which many things were said by others including comrade Miller. We do not understand why this particular alleged comment should be singled out from many made by Kent and other comrades.

We regret that this alleged "charge" has been brought into your executive as much as we would regret that others that might be considered to have been "unlaid" by comrade Kent, or Miller, or Paquette or Crandall, etc., etc. We cannot see that any purpose is served in respect to building our movement by pursuing this matter.

With regards to comrades Miller and Frazer moving to the center; You recommend that this decision remain inoperative until it can be reviewed by the next plenum, which, unless there is some unforeseen development, will not take place for another six months and possibly not before the next convention itself which is not slated for almost a year.

You supply us with no motivation for such an unusual recommendation. We doubt that you consider the question to be of such a momentous character that the body authorized by the central committee to see that its decisions are implemented between plenums and conventions, and authorized to conduct the affairs of the League, is not competent to cope with this problem. Perhaps you feel that the plenum did not fully consider possible difficulties that would arise from its decision? If this is so we think that in order to permit us to give the consideration to this recommendation that it deserves you should motivate it.

As you know the Central Committee and the Political Committee are fully authorized to transfer party members from one branch to another as they see fit -- in the overall interests of the movement. However we agree that it is desirable that the executive of the branch directly involved be consulted. We do not feel as your third point suggests that this desirable procedure was infringed upon in any real respect. Four members, a very high percentage of your executive, participated in the plenum. Prior to that particular session of the plenum both comrades Miller and Frazer had agreed to this proposal. This was not presumptuous on their part for early this Spring there had been a meeting with comrade Kent in Vancouver attended by Miller, Frazer, Adair, R, R, and



PC Minutes, July 27, 1967

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APPENDIX II (cont'd.)

N, where it was agreed, only under slightly different circumstances that comrade Miller, and comrade Frazer later, would leave for the east.

We hope that these comments will meet with your agreement.

P. Kent,  
for the Political Committee.



Chairman: Connolly   Secretary: Bannon   PC Present: Bannon, Connolly, Kent.  
PC Absent: Crandall (conducting class)  
Mack (holidays)  
CC Present: Bourhis, Paquette, Scott.

Minutes of July 27, 1967 adopted as read.  
Agenda adopted.

Business arising from minutes: Received correspondence from Miller protesting PC decision to publish Chapters 2 and 8 of his material on "Who Owns Canada" in the internal discussion bulletin. Motion: 1) to rescind the decision to publish Chs. 2 & 8 in the internal discussion bulletin because of Miller's objections, even though we remain unclear on those objections, since the material was projected for public circulation in the first place, and 2) that these chapters be circulated in the Central Committee only - carried. Received correspondence from Frazer directed to PC. Motion: to publish this letter and a reply along the lines of discussion appended to these minutes - carried.

Quebec: Organizational: Discussion. Motion: to continue as one branch, giving priority to the French language, i.e., that leading comrades will be expected to function in French wherever possible, formal records including minutes to be kept in French, and a general understanding that translation of discussion will be available upon request - carried. It was reported that the Montreal comrades are experimenting with holding separate language educationals, the English educational prior to the regular branch meeting, and the French educational in the latter part of the meeting. Motion: to adopt in principle the idea of obtaining electronic equipment to aid in translation, and to investigate the specifics of this further. It was agreed that further discussion should be conducted in the near future concerning our long-range perspective on the question of organizational structure to meet the needs of the language situation.

Editorial Board of La Lutte Ouvriere: Motion: to concur with the personnel recommendations of the present board, i.e. that Paquette and Nora be added to the board and Natalie be dropped - carried. Discussion of additional publications. Motion: to begin writing a draft for a popular presentation of "what the LSO is", to be published in French - carried. Motion: that the section constitution and the document on LSA-LSO relations be published in French - carried.

Quebec anti-war slogans: Discussion. Motion: we accept in principle the demand "self-determination for Vietnam and Quebec" but we do not advocate this for an official slogan of the Quebec anti-war movement - carried.

Provincial Elections: Paquette reported speculation on the possibility of the calling of an election this year. Unanimous agreement that this would present us with excellent opportunities in terms of entering a candidate.

Cuba Work: Discussion. Motion: to publish a directive along the lines of discussion-carried.

Personnel: Motion: to inform the YS/LJS that we concur with the transfer applied for by Forrest to go to Montreal - carried.

International: Strong has agreed to stay in England for another year. Question of replacement under consideration.

Tour of Walter: Decided we should make tentative moves to secure connections for this projected tour, especially in Quebec.

Adjourned: 8:10 p.m.



August 9, 1967.

Vancouver

Dear Comrade Miller:

in response to your letter of August 8 in which you ask for an immediate response with regards to your working on a statement.

The minutes of the August 5th meeting at which we considered your correspondence of August 2 have been delayed somewhat due to the pressure of other work. However you will receive them within the next week, and you will note that we have acceded to your demand that the chapter 8 of your manuscript not be published as a position of yours in an internal bulletin and that chapter 2 not be published either until such time perhaps as you have decided to rewrite it. Copies will be circulated to members of the executive committee only so as to give them some idea as to what the decisions and debate pertain to.

Our proposal to publish Chapters 2 and 8 was not at all motivated by a feeling on our part that the movement needs a discussion on Canadian nationalism--although such of course might well have developed through their publication. Our purpose was since you continue to press for publication on such terms as are unsatisfactory to us to take the matters at dispute out of the narrow circle to which they have so far been confined in order to make it clear why the CC is not prepared to publish the manuscript even within the framework of your various proposals.

We are not at all aware of any need to open an internal discussion on the IMPORTANCE of the question of Canadian nationalism. And in so far as its being a major question of priority---we are not at all sure what you mean. The character of Canadian nationalism and the method of dealing with it seems to me to be quite another matter--and the publication of chapter 8 might well have provided a valuable point of reference for such a discussion.

But with regards to the matter of priorities. We have been intending as I informed you previously to carry other material on the question of Canadian nationalism besides the report of the Banff seminar carried in the Mid-May issue of the Vanguard--specifically a reply to a major policy statement by NDP leader Taylor and material that has been appearing in Canadian Dimensions. While we were publishing the extensive instalments of our trade union pamphlet and the statement of our Arab-Israeli co-thinkers we felt that we were unable to allocate the necessary space. The coming issue of the Vanguard will be carrying material in response to the open letter to Canadian nationalists appearing in a recent issue of Canadian Dimensions.

We do not see any purpose in opening up an internal discussion on the importance of Canadian nationalism itself or as a major question of priority. Nor do we see the value of opening up an internal discussion on the relationship of the Canadian bourgeoisie to the American in economic terms. However I will certainly present any and all ideas you have on this to the coming meeting of the PC for consideration.

comradely

P. Kent



August 13, 1967.

Dear Comrade Frazer:

We read your letter of August 5 with regards to the plenum and other matters with considerable interest.

Of course we are all aware that there were many shortcomings. Some of the problems arose out of the inability of the executive secretary to return to Canada in time to participate in, let alone prepare, many aspects of the plenum until the last session.

Re the post of editor about which there was no mention at the plenum. This was purely and simply an oversight. Comrade Strong, the only nominee other than Brock, withdrew because of his assignment for another year in England. The PC had not thought in terms of any other comrades not had any CC member suggested anyone else. Although of course it is possible that given that information at the plenum others might have been nominated.

Unfortunate as this may be we think that it is generally agreed that this was an administrative error which would not have affected the final outcome and there is no desire on anyone's part to reopen this question. If we are wrong in this we would like to know immediately.

You state that there was no provision on the agenda for the discussion of a document submitted by comrade Miller on the Vanguard. You are mistaken in this -- it appeared on the agenda under Press Report and was discussed at the Tuesday morning session. You say that "the question of the relationship between branch leaderships and the center, between CC members and the PC which has been documented by the PC was not discussed." However you are in error here too. This was the entire theme of comrade Kent's Organizational Report given at the Tuesday afternoon session. The situation in Vancouver, which you correctly say was not on the agenda and mistakenly say took its place only came up in the course of the discussion of the Organizational Report.

In general we would point out that the Central Committee in plenary session is the highest body of the party and it, (all its members, not the PC) is responsible for the agenda.

At its meeting of June 10 the PC prepared an agenda for submission to the plenum and as advance information to the CC. This appeared in the PC minutes of June 10, circulated shortly after through the CC. As we reported there was already a proposal by Miller that time be allocated for "discussion of our work with other tendencies." This was the only proposal that we received from CC members prior to the plenum. We recommended non-concurrence on the basis that "we do not consider this a controversial question in the movement generally or one that is pivotal at this particular time and feel with the little time available for the plenum it would not be justified to allocate time specifically for this topic."

The opening session of the plenum was presented with an agenda by the PC. With the agreement of every member of the CC, yourself included to our knowledge, this agenda was adopted. It was possible at any time to propose adjustments in the agenda and this was done. The plenum, the members of the CC in attendance, collectively decided what it thought should be discussed.

Re the manuscript by comrade Miller. It is true that this was not discussed and therefore no decision was made. No one at the plenum suggested it be discussed. Although it should be noted that in response to a previous protest from comrade Miller against what we consider to have been simple operative decisions we suggested that the matter was by no means closed and "can be reopened by the forthcoming CC plenum or by the PC itself, should CC members so wish."

No one at the plenum suggested that this matter should be opened up; and correctly so in our opinion as it would be extremely difficult to discuss a lengthy and involved document which most were unfamiliar with. Rather than place the matter before the plenum comrade Miller made some further proposals. These were dealt with at the PC meeting of July 27 and reported in the minutes.

Perhaps these decisions are the ones that you interpret as dumping the project. However we do not consider that they do so. Far from dumping the manuscript the PC is trying to find some means to come to grips with the problems posed by it. That is why we made the decision to publish chapters 2 and 8 in an internal bulletin.

That is why we have expressed surprise about comrade Miller's protest against publication of the material that has been prepared for external and public sale in our internal bulletin. Due to shortage of staff, the PC was unable to implement its decision before



comrade Miller made it aware of his opposition. We have acceded to his demand. Now other ways will have to be found to come to grips with this matter.

We are fully appreciative of the efforts that comrade Miller put into the preparation of the manuscript and what it cost the Vancouver branch and the party as a whole. But the facts surrounding the whole matter are quite contrary to how you describe them.

Some while back it was decided that we required a popular and quite low-priced pamphlet outlining who owns Canada and how they rule it -- the first part leaning heavily on the material in Vertical Mosaic. Comrade Crandall was to work on this when we heard that comrade Miller, independently, was working on a project which we were given to understand was somewhat along the same line. Our idea of what we wanted was transmitted to comrade Miller via phone and he agreed to take on the project along the line of our concept of what the movement needed. Not only were we later astounded to see to what proportions the manuscript had grown, but on examination we found it to be of a totally different character. We neither endorsed this project at any stage of its development nor have we now scrapped it.

"It should be taken seriously, though" you write. This is correct and that is just how we have tried to handle the matter. There has been a great deal of discussion here among the leading comrades both informally and at PC meetings and via correspondence with comrade Miller. The PC has presented its position both in the minutes of its meetings and in correspondence. There has been so much discussion that at one point, in his May 30th letter, comrade Miller stated that, "I am thoroughly sick of the whole discussion."

Generalizing on the previous matters that you raised in your letter you say "we (referring to yourself and comrade Miller) were dismissed or outvoted, not consulted and convinced." You further write "leading comrades outside as well as inside the center (should be encouraged) to take initiative and take responsibility for the decisions we are making as a whole movement."

Surely you are mistaken in mixing up "not consulted" and "dismissed" with "not convinced" and "outvoted". We do not think any comrades' opinions were dismissed or that any comrades were not consulted. To be sure some may not have been convinced by the discussions and found themselves in a minority, when we finally took the vote so that we could start to act on a certain matter and move forward to other matters confronting us.

It is often unpleasant to be outvoted, to find oneself in a minority, particularly when it involves a matter of crucial importance to the Canadian socialist revolution and not distinctly secondary matters as we have been in disagreement over in the past while. Yes, it certainly is important not to make mountains out of molehills.

In a previous letter to the Vancouver branch executive (July 28) we questioned its recommendation to the Political Committee that a decision made by the plenum not be acted upon by the leading body of the party between conventions, a body constituted as such by our constitution. The Vancouver branch executive recommended that the PC should take no action, that the plenum decision remain inoperative until another plenum, which we pointed out would not in all probability take place before a convention of the section. We expressed our doubt that the executive of one of the branches of our movement questioned the competency of the Political Committee to cope with the specific matter that confronted us.

In our opinion we have done everything possible to develop a leadership right across the country as you urge be done -- but within the framework that the Political Committee, the central body of our bolshevik organization, has the responsibility of leading the movement. That is, that it carries on as wide a discussion with the CC as is possible but that at certain points it calls votes and that it sees that the majority positions be implemented.

Fraternally,

(12.2)

Kent,  
for the Political Committee.



Political Committee Minutes, August 27, 1967. convened: 10:00 a.m.

Chairman: Crandall Secretary: Bannon PC present: all.  
YS/LJS: Pedersen

Minutes of the previous meeting adopted as read. Agenda adopted.

Business arising from minutes: Received letter from CAC of YS/LJS accepting our proposal concerning fraternal representation. Motion/ to file - carried.

Finances: Discussion of youth fund drive and financial relations between the youth and the LSA/LSO. Motion: that with the general objective in mind of centralizing the funds of the movement and establishing the financial autonomy of the youth, 1) that funds presently allocated to the youth through branches from now on go through the Central Office and that commitments to the youth made by branches in the past will now be assumed by the Central Office, which should be informed by branches immediately on the specifics of such commitments as they might have made, 2) that we open a fund drive in the LSA/LSO to help us meet our commitments to youth work and international work with an objective of \$2000, and 3) that LSA/LSO contributions now earmarked for the youth fund drive be credited to the LSA/LSO drive and forwarded to the Central Office - carried. Motion: that all financial relations between the LSA/LSO and the YS/LJS should be handled through their central offices - carried. Motion: to inform branches that we are now in the process of considering a complete reevaluation of the entire financial operations of the movement, particularly the matter of sustainer payments to the Central Office by branches - carried. Motion: that the executive secretary write such a letter along the lines of the discussion - carried.

Personnel: Discussion re correspondence re implementation of CC plenum decision on transfer of Miller and Frazer to center. Motion: that in light of the considerations raised in correspondence from the Vancouver executive committee, this matter be left in abeyance by the PC, to be reconsidered by it after a period of six months - carried.

Publications: Re Miller material on "Who Owns Canada". Motion: to write letter to Miller within the framework of our overall position, but particularly with regards to our line disagreements with Ch. 8 - carried.

Circulation: Received proposal from Vancouver that paper be airmailed there and that subs be mailed on arrival. Motion: to inform Vancouver that we will investigate the practicability of this arrangement - carried.

International: Report by Kent that Strong will be coming here shortly for a period of three weeks. Motion: to ask Strong to consider making a brief, airflight tour of the branches, giving a talk externally on the British left and an internal on the work of the international movement - carried.

Membership: Report by Kent. Motion: to approve the transfer of Oscar to Edmonton - carried. Motion: to approve Henderson's remaining as member-at-large in Sudbury - carried. Motion: to approve transfer of Anderson to Saskatoon as a member-at-large - carried.

Vanguard: Motion: to strike off an editorial board of Brock, Crandall, Kent, Pedersen and Pratt - carried. Motion: to allocate Mack to the administration of the paper - carried. Motion: that the EB meet and bring down



Vanguard: (cont'd.) proposals regarding changes to the paper as we move into twice-monthly publication - carried. Motion: to place Brock on staff as editor - carried.

Procedural: Motion: to excuse Mack for remainder of meeting - carried.

Anti-War: Motion: to send out a report of preparations for October 21 mobilization in Toronto to branches - carried. Discussion of personnel.

Adjourned: 2:15 p.m.



1 Cumberland St.  
Toronto 5, Ont.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"It would be a disservice to the party he leads and a crime against the electorate of a Nova Scotia riding, should NDP leader T.C. Douglas submit to Liberal-Tory pressure that the newly-elected Progressive Conservative party leader Robert Stanfield be unopposed" said Ross Dowson, executive secretary of the League for Socialist Action.

"The NDP must confront the Tory leader in any future by-election designed to get him into the Commons and Mr. Douglas ill-advises the NDP leadership when he says that he will 'do everything possible to see that we don't oppose him.'"

Mr. Dowson said that he understands why Prime Minister Pearson assured Mr. Stanfield an acclamation. "The Tories provide the Liberals with an easy foil and thus help assure that one or the other party of the big business interests remains in office."

"But the New Democratic Party seeking power to legislate in the interests of the working people has the responsibility of showing the grave issues that confront the Canadian people. It must not get caught up in the parliamentary game, but must counterpose itself to the Liberals and Tories at every opportunity."

"Mr. Douglas attempts to justify his statements by saying that Mr. Stanfield should be given an opportunity to indicate by vote where he stands on various issues and what his alternative policies are. But Mr. Stanfield has been 20 years in public life, and 11 years a premier -- the Tory premier of the province of Nova Scotia. His positions are clear -- from support of Canada's participation in the NATO-NORAD military alliances, to endorsement of the United States' murderous war in Vietnam and Canada's continued complicity in it, to down-the-line defence of free enterprise profiteering and the use of injunctions against organized labor."

"Should Mr. Douglas' fatuous proposition be endorsed by the federal leadership of the NDP, it is the responsibility of the Nova Scotia NDP leadership or an affiliated union to frustrate such designs by presenting a candidate."

Mr. Dowson forced an election in Hastings-Frontenac in 1957. By so doing, he frustrated a similar arrangement by M.J. Coldwell and Louis St-Laurent that was designed to let the late Sydney Smith step into the Commons as Diefenbaker's Minister of External Affairs.

-- for further information:

Ross Dowson,  
Executive Secretary,  
League for Socialist Action

September 11, 1967

Tel. 922-6665



September 14, 1967

Vancouver

Dear Al

(Harris)

Sorry to be so long in taking up your correspondence. Today was knocked out by the arrival of Eduardo Gispert---the chap I met in Cuba who so favorably impressed me. He is going to be here until the weekend then is going to Montreal and Vottawa for a week to return to stay with us for two weeks. The two or three days prior to that were taken up with our various actions around ~~the anti-imperialist~~ ~~the anti-imperialist~~ Douglas's assurance that the NDP would fight Stanfield's by-election. We got really big publicity. At first a few out of town radios reported on our press release---telling us I think that Canadian press put it on their wires---then a couple of phone call interviews that went over the air---then a few seconds on Channel 9 TV---then last night a full seven minute interview on Channel 6 CBC TAB

But here we are.

Aside from the whole question of the PC decision---I must say I was pleased to see that you took on the responsibility of organizer. I read your explanation as to why you did not support the idea of your working full time and I must in all honesty tell you that I do not agree. Of course since the decision has been made it would be extremely disruptive ~~in~~ of the ~~branch~~ workings of the branch there for me to raise this whole matter other than on a personal plane at this time. I wish that I had known of your intention to take on the post of organizer but not go on staff. Vancouver Branch is probably the only branch of a revolutionary socialist tendency anywhere in the world that has full timers---in a store, and in the youth but does not have a full timer on the staff of what is the party.

I am glad to hear that the division of labor between yourself and Phil is working out well so far. It may well be because of both your personalities that it will continue to work out as we all want it to. And of course we want to widen the ranks of comrades who work for the movement. But I do not see what relevancy this has to our concept of having you on full time. I do not think our concept of a collective leadership is realized by widening the number of staff members and by achieving this by making the political leader part time.

We need the organizer on full time because the problems and the possibilities of the movement require his services full time---we are required to free him from the problems of making a living---so that his hours are completely adjustable to the requirement of the movement. Of course we like all leading activists in our movement to have a rounded experience---as trade unionists, journalists, ~~speakers~~ and what you will but we give top priority to the concept that the party requires the best possible comrades on staff and in a position to fit the requirement of being on staff. ~~It is~~

Payments to comrades working for the movement are absurd if while releasing him from punching into a shop they are so marginal that they set off other worries. The movement has no right to ask comrades aside from their putting themselves at its service to suffer all kinds of financial inconvenience. I would move that the wages paid comrades there be raised across the line. I think that the branch and youth is of sufficient strength now there that it can meet this problem. If it can't it might have to consider re-allocation of its resources---possibly cut out the store if it continues to be a financial drain until we can obtain a better location...possibly borrow some money from the center. But the total picture shows that we have considerable resources and that they are going to build up. So money cannot be a factor in this decision.



It seems to me that a bad precedent has been set by this decision. I hope that it was discussed fully on the executive plane. You say nothing in your letter about the opinion of other comrades on the executive, or for that matter about any discussion that might have taken place at the conference which I gather adopted this arrangement. I think our movement over the years has established a very clear concept on this question

Our organizers are going to be deprived of all kinds of desirable experiences in the unions and in other areas of work but we want a professional leadership. These shortcomings are made up by the collectivity of the party, the unionists passing on all their experiences and knowledge to the professionals. The professional no more needs to have trade union experience and be the best unionist than he has to be the best floor scrubber, or window washer. Money can never be the problem in a branch which has resources such as Vancouver has --if it is ~~properly~~ accepted as a decision matter then ~~the~~ I can only conclude that we have not got a correct evaluation of the essentiality of a full time professional staff.

Therefore I would regret very much if there was not an expressed opposition on both the executive plane and at the conference, that at least the record was made--if not ~~operated~~ operated on.

But now that that has been done let us move on to the matters at hand.

I would be very much surprised if Jim Cannon would be able to come to a banquet. He has been bouncing back but the movement has been helping get a couple of new books out of his system. I spoke to Garry about sending a letter to everyone on the Mandel tour. After not hearing from him for sometime I finally I phoned him direct. He told me that it was not possible at this time but he made a very firm commitment that he would come this spring. It seems to me not too important which season. As soon as we get the letter confirming this spring we will write him and fix the date so that we can proceed across the country.

A very good development--that class in the CP. Nothing like this taking place here in Toronto. How is the ~~Canadian~~ Pacific Tribune handling the OLAS conference and subsequent developments? This is going to cause them no end of trouble. The problem here is to get our hands on them. They appear to be just slipping away into nothingness. I suppose you noted our article on the Sudbury scene. Ted is still up there and it now looks like he will stay for a couple of years. We have sent Jim Brown up--he wants to move on but needs money so he is going to stick it out--he is very aggressive and will be a help to Ted. Has the CP trade union force made the turn to Steel. I would think that there would be considerable opposition. What do you think is going to happen to the rest of the CP influenced independents now that Mine Mill has gone? In your comments on the CP class and our effective work in it you mention a Caron as being opposed to Morgan. What is involved here.

Glad to hear that the new youth headquarters is coming along well.

with revolutionary greetings

Ross D



Toronto, September 18 -- The Political Committee of the League for Socialist Action announced today that it has chosen Ross Dowson as labor's standard-bearer in the expected by-election in the Nova Scotia riding of Colchester-Hants. The by-election will be called to give newly-elected Conservative party leader Robert Stanfield an opportunity for election to the House of Commons.

Mr. Dowson, who is Executive Secretary of the ISA and its Quebec co-thinker, the Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere, had declared earlier that the ISA/ISO would contest the by-election if the New Democratic Party failed to field a candidate. The Nova Scotia leader of the NDP announced Friday that it intended to follow federal leader T.C. Douglas' urgings to abstain from a contest with Mr. Stanfield.

Mr. Dowson forced an election in the Ontario constituency of Hastings-Frontenac in 1957, when he ran against External Affairs Minister Sydney Smith, thereby foiling the plans of Opposition leader Louis St-Laurent and CCF leader M.J. Coldwell to ease Dr. Smith into the House of Commons without electoral opposition.

In a statement today, Mr. Dowson pointed out that the NDP's failure to run against Stanfield is doing the old line parties a favor they have never paid the NDP or its predecessor, the CCF. "When Tommy Douglas ran in Regina, the Liberals put up a sleeper, while the Tories ran a strong candidate and defeated him. In his subsequent attempt in Burnaby-Coquitlam, the Liberals entered their top 'brain-truster', Tom Kent, in an effort to keep Mr. Douglas out of the House."

Referring to widespread dissension among NDP supporters concerning Mr. Douglas' promise to "do everything possible to see that the NDP doesn't oppose Stanfield," Mr. Dowson emphasized that the NDP's refusal to run is all the more inexcusable in view of the election campaigns presently underway in three provinces.

"In Ontario and Saskatchewan, the party has a good chance of taking power. In New Brunswick, the party leadership has already reversed its earlier decision to abstain."

Asked if he thought he could win, Mr. Dowson commented: "No one thought the late Joe Noseworthy would win when he ran against the newly-appointed Tory leader Arthur Meighen in 1942. But he did. Meighen was forced to retire from public life, and the CCF thereby marked one of its first important victories in the Eastern urban areas which today constitute a base for the NDP."

Mr. Dowson said he will campaign "essentially on the NDP program, so that NDP supporters in Colchester-Hants will not be deprived of an opportunity to express their views." But he hopes to win support from all those who oppose the Tory party, "including Liberals who are disgusted with Pearson's deal to aid Stanfield's election."



1 Cumberland Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
September 22, 1967

The Chief Electoral Officer, J.M. Hamel  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Sir;

I would appreciate your sending to me as soon as possible all pertinent information and documentations as would permit me to enter the by-election that has been called in Colchester-Hants, N.S.

I have in my possession a copy of the Canada Election Act as assented to on August 1st 1960. Under Section 21 part 5 I note that 25 or more electors are required to sign Form 27. I have heard comments to the effect that this number has since been raised. At that same time as you send me the various forms including 27 I would appreciate your clarification on this matter.

sincerely

Ross Dowson



Political Committee minutes

Oct 22, 1967

Convened 10:00pm

Chairman: Connolly

Secretary: Bannon

Present: Bannon, Brock, Connolly, Mack

Absent: on campaign, Kent, Crandall  
on tour, Pederson (YS-LJS)

Strongtour:

M/C - to send plane fare plus needed cash

M/C - to immediately confirm the decision for an airflight tour  
of branches.

SWP convention:

M/C - Connolly to be the fraternal delegate

By-election:

M/C - on personell, to write along lines of the discussion.

Anti-war:

M/C - to write to branch organizers and members at large  
for full reports and evaluations on the Oct. 21st mobilization  
in preparation for political committee discussion on our  
anti-war work.

adjourned: 10:35pm.



October 22, 1967

Dear Lois;

(Bedard, sister)

Received your note while in Toronto but got enmeshed in the preparatory work of our election campaign in Colchester-Hatns, Nova Scotia--about 50 miles outside of Halifax.

And here I am on the scene of action--temporarily demobilized. Last night as we were leaving Halifax to return to Truro the van broke down. We have been forced to leave it, and come into our cabin by taxi. We have done most of the things that we can without a vehicle and so have time to take up some corresponden

We-is Joh Riddell and two others whom you havent met. Yesterday after we got over the worrisome work of getting the 25 signatures in the community we went into join the Vietnam protest march in Halifax. It was the biggest event in Halifax history----a big turnout--someth ing like 500. I have just heard that the Toronto turnout was 5,000 --that would make it t e biggest ever. I spoke at a meeting that the university anti-Vietnam war group held in the evening after the demo--to about 200. A stupid meeting. The speaker who preceded me--a prof a young one from t e local university gave a dry and irrelevant talk with a certainly sectarian impact on The need for revolutionary violence. The speaker who followed me gave an arrogant petty-fogging egotistical talk on Vietnam and International law. It would seem that several wofs who think of themselves as revolutionaries of course everywhere but in Canada--Maoists of a sort--have rushed themselves forward as theoreticians of the anti-war struggle so to speak. I got for my cuttin across their line a very good response from the audience. We distributed the pape with the enclosed leaflet to the demonstration and ~~none~~ one of the boys sold 25 copi of the YSF confederation issue. We made several contacts who seemd interested in coming out to help us. One group was supposed to come out today but so far--now 4:40 have failed to arrive.

Halifax to

John will be going to re-organize help--get the truck fixed, arrange a couple of meetings that I have been invited to address y university groups--and we will carry on here tomorrow after we file our nomination papers. We have a committee room on the main street--now plastered with our excellent posters. We distributed Mr Stanfield's underwear factory on Friday. and the day before after coming in from Sydney introduced ourselves to the local radio which interviewd me and the local paper which also interviewed me.

We have fallen into the biggest economic challenge that has ever confronted the Maritimes and possibly Canada. Just as our sendoff meeting came to an end and I had only previously projected t e need to nationalize the Dosco complex at Sydney (the govt is closing out the mines) a reporter came to me and asked what I would say if I knew that Dosco had announced that night at 7 the closure of the steel mill too. Of course I made an appropriate comment. So the whole economic development policy of the Stanfield govt has been blow up. Dosco steel hires 3,500. The NDP brass has had to come out for nationalization, along with the union leadership and here we are carrying the ball that they deflated on.

Aside from this shameful situation we found over Thursday and Friday that not one NDPer in the community would sign our nomination paper--they have taken a hard and formal line--not too hard to enforce because there are only 5 or 6 of them. There is also such a terrible fear among the local ~~industrial~~ residents of this Stanfield mill dominated town about their jobs that we finally ended up in or to get our 25 names by going to another town in the area--Windsor. There was no trouble there.



One of the boys ~~last~~ drove with me to Sydney---all the brass were meeting there in order to plot ,work out some formula to con the public with. There were reports that the steelworkers were going to demonstrate. All the steelleaders, as the press said acted very responsibly. We went to the union hall and there was a local meeting in progress with a dozen or so fellows milling around in the foyer. I asked them what they were going to do--and one said like we always do--with great disgust --damn all? When we said we were going down to the hotel where the brass were meeting a couple of fellows excitedly offered to take us down--to go with us. I know damn well we could have pulled that entire meeting--but unfortunately ~~that~~ we are only passersby and not able to lead any action like that forward. We had a couple of leads and one invited me over---there were five guys, a couple of them leading unionists, talking about local elections. Really pitiful--no cadre forces although lots of possibilities.

So far we have done not badly publicity wise. Got a two hour phone in program in Halifax which people tell me took over next days program too. When I came out of that CBC was there and took a couple of minutes TV then the local daily which has province-wide circulation gave us ~~more~~ a good interview and write up. Got half an hour at Sydney--didn't hear the Truro radio so I don't know what they did with the interview. We will probably be buying time in Truro as it is reasonable and has good coverage--after 8 in the evening it is a CBC transmitter. Hard to say how things will go here in the riding. But our main street headquarters is very good and our literature-posters are first rate. We are hoping to consolidate something in Halifax--and of course the Canada wide publicity is valuable--cutting us in our entirely correct relationship to the NDP.

I assume that you got everything worked out with Ernie re-Connie's apartment etc. Shortly after getting your note Rennie came to a forum. As you probably know Susan is out and back to school. As you will note from the paper I spoke to the opening meeting of the Lutherhan College NDP club in Waterloo. I dropped in on Armin and Et'ie on the way back for about half an hour. They are well. Armin sent in ~~an announcement~~ a copy of the useful clipping plus dramatic photo on the meeting. Didn't get to Ruth's supper before leaving due to the pressure of getting the paper underway with Dick and the election stuff with Harry.

Will be back in Toronto for our November 11 RR celebration

affectionately

Ross



October 28, 1967  
1 Cumberland Street  
Toronto 5, Ont.

Paul W. MacEwan  
Sydney, N.S.

Dear Sir;

It was with some considerable pleasure that I read your series of articles on the late J.B. McLachlan in the Cape Breton Highlander. When I was in your city preparing for the Colchester-Hants by-election and dropped into the Highlander they were so good as to give me the earlier copies.

I understand that you have written up other material on the history of the Cape Breton working class movement. I am very much interested and am wondering if it is not possible to obtain copies--even if only on a loan basis.

I am enclosing a copy of a small brochure that I wrote on the union movement recently that may be of interest to you.

of Canada  
Are you acquainted with The Trade Union Movement by C Lipton that has just been published.

These are days for Cape Breton that surely need another McLachlan

fraternally

Ross Dowson

Incidentally Malcolm Bruce to whom you refer was long a friend of mine. He died only last April 29. I am enclosing a copy of the Vanguard which contains an appreciation of his life.



October 28, 1967

Vancouver

Dear Ruth;

Sorry to be so long in taking up your letter of the 12th. It arrived here just before our taking off for Nova Scotia and right after I had already received Al E's request for the loan of \$200.

I myself was quite suprised by Al's request. I was even more suprised that it had already been taken to the branch and voted on. In my opinion this latter action is most unfortunate as it practically takes the whole matter off the plane of discussion. With the branch already lined up it is very difficult for the center to refuse or to state the case. Since I was leaving in the next 24 hours or so I ~~set~~ off the cheque along with a note to Al voicing my protest. However ~~he~~ seems quite unprepared to understand my protest.

Your letter arrived the next day or so--after my action-- and so I took it off with me to N.S. to answer first opportunity. I agree with you one hundred percent although I must say had I not already complied to the branch's request I think I would have found it hard refuse, as you suggest. The problem as I see it is that it went into the branch. I do not understand at all why such a matter as this should go into the branch, even how it could get into the branch. It is one thing for an executive to make such a request--it would not need approval or disapproval of a branch in order to make such a request. But why it should go to the branch to have its full weight behind it is hard to understand.

Needless to say we never got the necessary calm to answer your letter when in NS. We spent the whole week prior to nomination day doing preparatory work outside the riding--lining up contacts in Halifax for the effort and filling in for the battle with a side trip to the crisis scene in Cape Breton. Finally got into the riding Wednesday afternoon--contacted press and radio--got our nomination petitions in order--went off to Halifax to participate in the October 21 affair, got back to set up the headquarters--then nomination day Monday.

Well it was quite a victory although we had to drag the NDP brass to the nominations kicking and screaming at the very zero hour. The support that the Alberta NDP gave us along with the NS NDY--together with the open identification of a former NDP candidate with the campaign over the two hour phone-in program I had on the Halifax radio--along with the big Dosco crisis forced their hand. We were already to go and while the victory was exhilarating I regret that we were unable to do the job that I know we could and that they won't do.

Well it certainly put on the public record for all to see just what our attitude to the NDP is--although it cost us a fair amount.

with socialist greetings

Ross



Roll of Kover  
✓ E4

1965-67 RD

Nov 21

<sup>1n</sup>  
1967

Dear Ross:

Of course I'm glad to add my signature on behalf of Ben Bella. There are, however, no friends of mine around here, or even acquaintances that I think would be any use. I'd be button-holing near strangers if I asked. Friends and people I know are now nearly all in Toronto and other larger cities.

I expect to be here, working on a house I inherited a year ago, for another 10 days or so. When I go back to Toronto I'll give you a call. If there's anything else I can do, or if you plan anything in which I can help, I'll be glad to--

I hear Acorn is back in hospital in Vancouver. I guess that requires no further comment tho.

Best,

Al Bundy



December 12, 1967

Vancouver

Dear Allan;

Sorry to be so long in answering your letter of November 29.

One of the reasons for the delay has been my confusion as to the question of personnel changes we are in the midst of discussing and in particular your attitude to coming to the center.

But there are first a couple of matters that I would like to straighten the record on

I do not know who the non-CC comrade is whom I am alleged to have talked with about you and Ruth B. Since you know who it is and he spoke to you about what I am supposed to have said about you I will leave this phase of the matter. But when this person who is unknown to me ~~immediately~~ goes on to tell you what I am alleged to have said about a fourth person I must protest. I assure you that I did not and never have said anything remotely similar to what he claims. I do not even know what is meant by "the bad situation in the Vancouver branch." What bad situation? And why I would attribute it to Ruth B whose contribution to the branch I am well aware of is quite beyond my comprehension. I am surprised that you accept such talk as good coin. I would appreciate it if this should ever be repeated in your hearing if you would do me the favor of making a blanket denial on my behalf.

I would also like to assure you on behalf of the PC that it has no "suspiciousness of comrades outside the center." I know that a denial does not settle such a charge. But the PC which has been given the responsibility to conduct the affairs of the movement between conventions and plenums --to build the movement--cannot accept such a statement as you make in your letter

However to get to the meat of the question--your coming to the center.

I am quite unclear after reading your letter what your desire is in this respect.

On the one hand you consider the standards that now prevail with regards to staff operations in the center "not the best" You consider I gather that there is undue pressure on comrades--there was when you were here which played a role in your going to Vancouver and that your recent visit here convinced you that there had not been any real change in this regard. You question that you could even survive politically in the center.

I do not think that this is the time and the place for me to explain or defend the operational atmosphere here in the center. The fact is that whatever it is--is, and I think that it is generally accepted if not consciously agreed upon by the leading comrades in the center and I doubt that it is going to be changed--unless your feelings in this respect were spelled out and advanced as superior methods as to how to build a Bolshevik cadre. My point is that the situation is what it is--and coming into the center you would be immersed in it. And we don't want to think in terms of survival but in terms of growth, in terms of development, expansion,



While expressing some desire to come into the center you express a particularly strong feeling that you must go on staff--or otherwise the whole move would have a very clearminus character for the movement. You suggest that it is almost a condition--of course from a political point of view. Naturally ~~if you are~~ going on staff places you right into the heart of the operations in the center and would completely immerse you in the atmosphere which you consider "not the best" and puts a question over your survival, as you say. As you know you chose not to go on staff as organizer of the Vancouver branch for reasons which I think are not unsimilar to those you express about the center.

As you know the movement at this stage in its development is not very flexible in the area of staff. There have been no far al decisions in this respect but I am sure that all of us are thinking that when Ernie returns from Europe that he would probably go on staff...and so we are thinking particularly in light of the quite small income at the disposal of the center whether we are able to take another comrade on staff.

However I do not think that this should be a strong element in our decision. Ernie's return is a year away and we have made no commitments.

You have expressed such views about the operations of the center and your own problems of adjustment that I would like to know whether you ~~think~~ consider we should go about the problem of trying to raise the funds to take you on staff.

fraternally

Ross



*(Undated document of the League for Socialist Action, Toronto, found in 1967—ed.)*

## STATEMENT BY THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

The enclosed contributions, excerpts of letters sent to the Political Committee, are for the information of Central Committee members only. What appears below is not intended to deal with these contributions individually or in detail, but to outline the Political Committee's view on what it considers to be the main questions at issue.

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In our estimation, the questions raised in these contributions represent a misconception of what are and should be the respective roles of the Central and Political Committees concerning the leadership of the movement as a whole between conventions and CC meetings.

What is involved in such a discussion is the problem of developing a section leadership. The fact is that we are still in the very early stages of developing such a leadership. The recent growth of the movement is only providing us with the human material for this development. One of the most important factors delaying this development in our section is the considerable dispersal of cadre that has taken place from the center in recent years, whether for colonization or to bolster existing branches. We are confronted with a situation where we have several leading and very able comrades removed from the center. This constitutes a scattering of what under other circumstances would be part of a functioning section leadership. This nonetheless does not alter the norm that the leadership body in the center, namely the Political Committee, constitutes the functioning section leadership between conventions and CC meetings. On the contrary, we should now be establishing the norm.

The conception that CC members outside the center can play a continuing role in the leadership of the movement is incorrect. This is the responsibility of the constituted center of the movement where we attempt to assure that a working core of the leadership is established in constant contact with the various parts of the movement and with one another.

The constitution of the section is quite clear concerning the role of the Political Committee, i.e., in Article V, Section 5: "The Political Committee is the functioning continuing body between CC meetings. **It acts for the CC between such meetings.** It is a subordinate body of the CC and all its decisions are subject to the approval of the CC" (emphasis added). If one compares this Section with Section 7 of the same Article, it is clear that the relationship of the PC to the CC is substantially similar to that of a branch executive to the membership of a branch. The PC, which is elected by the CC, is the executive of the CC. It is clearly the responsibility of an executive to act for the body of which it is the executive between full meetings of that body. It is empowered to do so with only one qualification: that its decisions are within the framework of the established program and organizational principles of the movement and the basic political orientation



of the movement as expressed in adopted convention documents. It is normal that consultation with members of the body not on the executive may take place where desirable and practical, but it is in no way obligatory on an executive to make such consultations.

Besides this, the concept that CC members not on the PC can play a continuing role in the decisions of the centre is simply not practical from any angle. It is not possible for the Central Committee to function as a collectivity between conventions with any degree of consistency because of the difficulties involved in enabling it to meet. As well, the great majority of decisions that the PC is called upon to make are of a semi-immediate character which does not permit extended discussion through correspondence or documentation. A great many of these decisions (e.g. those made recently concerning the printing shop) are of a highly technical character, requiring an intimate knowledge of the myriad factors involved. Such decisions are normally left to technically qualified comrades. They are brought to the PC only in the circumstance that the expenditure needed is considerable. After all, it has to be recognized that some comrades are experienced specialists in certain areas and that we place considerable confidence in their judgement, otherwise no rational division of labor is possible. The PC would paralyze itself if it got involved in all decisions of this type; it would have to meet every night of the week

The only practical method – if indeed it can be called practical – by which the CC could in some way function as a collectivity between its meetings would be leadership by referendum. Operationally this is simply not viable and it is in no way consonant with democratic centralism. For the PC to employ such a method would be an evasion of its responsibility as constitutionally defined. No leadership can be build with such methods. If the questions at issue were of such momentous character as to require a poll of the CC it would be incumbent on the PC to recommend that an emergency CC meeting or an emergency convention be convened. It is not our contention that the only practical way the CC can act as a collectivity is to **meet**, for us to call a plenary session.

The question of control of documentation is obviously decided by the definition of the role of the PC between CC meetings. The PC is the leading body of the movement between such meetings, and if the authority of the leading body means anything at all it must include complete control of documentation.

To draw a distinction between “formal” and other documentary material (once circulated) is not valid. A document is a document; that is the effect that it has regardless of whether it is officially declared to be such. The inferences concerning personal correspondence and verbal discussion are misplaced. No one is proposing to censor in any way correspondence between CC members, let alone verbal discussion. Those are on an entirely different **plane** than documentary material, all the more so in the case of comrade Miller’s document, which was specifically and unmistakeably titled a document.

When an individual comrade decides to circulate a document to CC members on an individual basis, he arrogates to himself the right – in essence – to decide when and



how discussion in the CC as a whole will take place on a question. This right belongs to the CC as a collectivity, not to the individual comrade.

Between CC meetings this right is the sole prerogative of the PC, if we are to take the constitution seriously. When a comrade circulates a document to CC members individually, without prior approval of the CC or PC, he is in fact opening discussion in violation of the prerogatives of both bodies. The discussion is already **started**. The PC, as the immediately functioning leadership body is **forced** to get involved whether or not in its judgment the time is propitious for such discussion. Surely that is an untenable position for the PC to be placed in.

Leaving the question of what we consider the organizational norms of a democratic centralist movement aside for the moment, it is not as if one could with any degree of justification accuse the PC of refusing to discuss questions raised to it by CC members outside of the center. The record demonstrates the precise opposite to be the case.

The contention that the PC's interpretation of its responsibility for the control and circulation of documentation gives a CC member outside the centre less rights than a comrade who is not a member of either body is not really supportable. No comrade on any level has the right to initiate documentation without the approval of the appropriate body. Even within the confines of a single branch, a comrade wishing to circulate documentation would have to submit such a proposal to the executive committee or, failing that, to the branch as a whole.

All of the foregoing does not negate the fact that the PC highly values the advice and opinions of CC members outside the center. In fact, given our highly limited resources, a considerable amount of correspondence and discussion does take place. But that is not the PC's primary responsibility. Its primary responsibility is to act as the functioning leadership of the section between CC meetings, a responsibility invested in it by the convention and by the CC which elects it.

The viewpoint of the PC on the question of its minutes and the function of the provision of information in general flows from its conception of the role necessarily played by the PC between CC meetings. The minutes, for example, are a formal record of the decisions of the meetings. They are not generally intended to convey information beyond that point. No executive, including the PC, should be considered obliged to provide information about discussions which do not result in concrete decisions or recommendations. It would in fact be irresponsible for the PC to do this, for it would be abdicating its responsibility to provide leadership, just as it would for a branch executive committee to throw questions onto the floor of a branch meeting without submitting a recommendation of its own position. The only justification for such a procedure would be that it was unable, for one reason or another, to reach a majority decision.

The above, to a large extent, also applies to the question of information. It seems to us that the desire of some comrades for a much greater volume of information to be



provided to them can only be motivated by a conception that CC members outside the center can and/or should play a continuing role in discussing and participating in decisions before the PC – a conception which we have already said we consider both erroneous and impractical. It further seems to us that this is the sole basis on which the energy and expense involved in consistently providing the volume of information that some comrades seem desirous of could be justified.

One of the most pressing needs of our movement in this period is the development of a viable section leadership, something we have lacked for a considerable time and for which a very small number of key comrades have had in the past to substitute themselves. This statement outlines why is it our opinion that this leadership must function from the center between section conventions and CC meetings, and why we cannot see how the leadership we are talking about – and which we discussed prior to and during our last section convention – can come with any continuing character from outside the center.

The direction of at least two of the other contributions in this appendix tends, not to strengthen the role of the PC, but to undermine it and replace it with a kind of leadership-by-referendum-and-consultation concept that we think is quite unacceptable. Such a direction will not aid in developing a viable and experienced section leadership but will place serious obstacles in the way of it. It should be noted that none of the contributions say precisely that, but it appears to us that this is their direction.

Just as the PC places a certain confidence in the leadership of the branches and thereby does not as a matter of course demand exhaustive information on what is going on, and very rarely intervenes in their decisions, or even subjects those decisions to anything but a very broad scrutiny, we think it is only logical to expect that CC members display a similar attitude to the PC. It is our opinion that in addition to providing the PC with information, advice and opinions one of the most important roles of CC members outside the center can play is to strengthen and uphold the political authority of the center. This is essential in any movement that is democratic centralist in anything but name. The alternative direction is implicitly anti-centralist.

We think that if comrades examine the situation they will find that what we have outlined here of our conception of the role of the PC and the center is the norm for the revolutionary socialist movement and not in any way an exception. The alternative direction **is** exceptional in terms of the norms of our movement and we do not see any justification for this in terms of the political and organizational situation that our section finds itself in at the present time. On the contrary, what we have had in the past is a movement which has drastically lacked a necessary degree of centralism and coordination and at our last convention we expressed the intention to rectify that situation now that the further development of the movement would permit that to take place. As we see it the direction of the contributions of comrades Mill and Brock tends to cut right across this objective and would have the effect of leading us back from, not forward, to, the solution of the problem of constructing a collective section leadership.